

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

27 – 29 JUNE 2018

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE
BANGKOK, THAILAND

Concept Note

Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly resolutions 71/318 and 71/244, have mandated the United Nations to convene a high-level Conference on South-South cooperation on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). The second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, known as BAPA+40 Conference, will be held in Buenos Aires, Republic of Argentina, from 20 to 22 March 2019.

The overall objective of the High-level Conference is to review trends in South-South and triangular cooperation, including the progress made by the international community, and the United Nations, in supporting and promoting such cooperation. The Conference will also identify new opportunities that South-South and triangular cooperation present and the solutions to address sustainable development challenges, including South-South and triangular cooperation as enablers for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Conference is also expected to respond to the needs and challenges faced by the practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation and to generate innovative approaches of South-South and triangular cooperation.

The resolutions also encourage the United Nations to hold regional, sub-regional or sectoral meetings prior to the Conference.

1. Regional Consultation on South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific

South-South cooperation is one of the important drivers of the regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and has resulted in increased volumes of South-South trade, foreign direct investment flows and technology transfer. Over the decades, countries of the South have accumulated considerable expertise, experience, lessons and capabilities in their own development processes, which have been shared with other developing countries in the form of technical assistance. Middle-income developing countries, as emerging donors and technical cooperation providers, have significantly influenced the landscape of the South-South cooperation in this region and beyond. South-South and triangular cooperation have been identified as key modalities for delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To reach their full potential they need to be aligned, enhanced and structured to correspond with the needs and priorities of developing countries.

In line with the above mandates and given the prominence of the South-South and triangular cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), and the Government of Thailand will jointly organize the Regional Consultation on South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific: Towards the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 40th Anniversary, from 27 to 29 June 2018, at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.

The Regional Consultation will review the South-South cooperation trends, challenges and opportunities in the region in support of the SDG implementation. It will provide countries with a platform to share their experiences as providers or users of South-South and triangular cooperation, their institutional arrangements, policies and lessons learned. The Regional Consultation will also discuss and suggest how to

leverage the partnerships with the various stakeholders, including the civil society, think tanks and the private sector.

The outcomes from the Regional Consultation, while not binding, will facilitate exchange of ideas on policy, strategy and institutional and financial tools for South-South and triangular cooperation as well as management capacity at the regional level, and strengthen capacity of the Asia-Pacific member States to contribute more effectively at the High-Level Conference. The recommendations will also inform and contribute to the member States' deliberations as part of the informal intergovernmental negotiations towards the drafting of the outcome document of the High-Level Conference.

The inaugural Round Table of the Asia-Pacific Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation will be held in conjunction with this consultation. This Round Table targets the heads of the national agencies/units responsible for South-South cooperation from developing member States of ESCAP Region only. It will provide an opportunity to share good practices and experience in South-South and triangular cooperation and coordinate technical cooperation between the providers and beneficiary countries.

2. Themes and issues to be discussed at the Regional Consultation

The themes and issues to be discussed at the Regional Consultation include the following:

1. Trends and diversity of the South-South cooperation landscape in Asia-Pacific – turning challenges into opportunities
2. Institutional arrangements and management of South-South and triangular cooperation – experience and good practice
3. Modalities to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation through South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development
4. Roles of the United Nations Development System and other stakeholders including the civil society organizations and the private sector
5. Alternative approaches to sustainable development.

The discussions and key outcomes of the regional consultation will be consolidated in the form of a Chair's Summary for the information of all participants.

The detailed annotated programme of the consultation will be circulated in due course.

3. Expected outcomes

- (i) Increased awareness and enhanced capacity of ESCAP member States on effective utilization of South-South and triangular cooperation modalities to achieve the development goals and SDGs in Asia-Pacific.
- (ii) Well-defined, substantive way forward to support the implementation of SDGs in the region through the South-South and triangular cooperation.
- (iii) Mechanism in place for improved and streamlined coordination among the member States to harness the South-South and triangular cooperation in the priority areas identified in the Regional Consultation

The outcomes will be put forward in a non-binding Chair's summary to contribute to the discussions and outcomes of the BAPA+40 Conference in Buenos Aires in March 2019.

4. Dates and venue

The Regional Consultation is planned to take place from 27 to 29 June 2018 in Bangkok, United Nations Conference Centre, Conference Room 4.

5. Target audience

Member States and the other key stakeholders from the ESCAP Region, targeting the Heads of the development cooperation/South-South cooperation agencies or units within the governments. The representatives of think tanks, the civil society organizations and the private sector will also be invited.

6. Organizers

The meeting will be jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

7. Contact Details

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